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Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth
and as Queen Katharine

PUBLICATIONS
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OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Second Series

Papers on Acting:

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PAPERS ON ACTING

III

Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth and as Queen Katharine

BY

H. C. Fleeming Jenkin

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Brander Matthews

Printed for the

Dramatic Museum of Columbia University

in the City of New York

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INTRODUCTION

I. Sarah Siddons.

IN the history of no art are there more instances of the transmitting of great ability from father to son, and from son to grandson, than in the history of the art of acting. In political life and in literature it is not uncommon to see a son follow in his father's footsteps; but on the stage it is far more frequent. Instances abound, and there is no need to do more here than to set down the names of Edmund and Charles Kean, of Junius Brutus and Edwin Booth, and of Charles and Charles James Mathews; of the Jeffersons there have been five generations on the stage. This is perhaps because there is no profession in which inherited faculty and early training count more for success than they do in the histrionic. In no family has this inherited faculty and this early training given to the world more and greater artists than in the family of the Kembles; and there is no more glorious name in histrionic annals than that of Sarah Siddons.

As Henderson, the actor, said of her when she was on the threshold of her career, she was an actress who had never had an equal, nor would she ever have a superior.

Sarah Kemble was born July 5, 1755, at Brecknock, in South Wales. Her father was Roger Kemble, a strolling manager and actor; he was a man of high character and good breeding. His wife once said to Boaden, "there sits, unconscious of our remarks, the only *gentleman* Falstaff that I have ever seen." Mrs. Kemble was a daughter of Ward, the actor and manager, who, in 1746, gave a benefit in the Town Hall of Stratford for the purpose of restoring Shakspere's monument. It was from her mother, apparently, that Mrs. Siddons inherited her beauty. As a child she appeared on the stage with the other members of the family. Her father sought to give all his children the advantage of a good education; and Sarah Kemble was as carefully instructed as their circumstances would allow; she was more especially trained in music. "When she was about seventeen," Campbell records, "Mr. Siddons, who was still an actor in her father's company, paid his first

attentions to her; and it was soon perceived that they were acceptable." But if acceptable to the young lady, they were not to her parents. Mr. Siddons thought he was to be jilted in favor of a neighboring squire, and he took the audience into his confidence one night, by a song of his own composing, in which he called himself Colin and bewailed the fickleness of Phyllis; his allusions were so personal and direct, that when he came off the stage, the manager's wife boxed his ears. With the daughter he soon made it up; and she agreed to marry him whenever her parents would consent. It was probably to separate the lovers, that Mr. Kemble for a while placed his daughter in a private family, apparently as a companion or reader. She soon returned to the stage, and to Mr. Siddons; and at Coventry, Nov. 26, 1773, they were married. Mr. Siddons was a useful actor, ready to play any part at shortest notice, and likely to render it at least acceptably; but he was not a genius, and his wife was. He made her a devoted husband, and the marriage was happy in all respects.

Two years later, when she was twenty, she was engaged by Garrick, and as Portia she

made her first appearance at Drury Lane Theater, Dec. 29, 1775. Portia was as unsuitable a character for Mrs. Siddons, as Shylock was for King, who acted with her; she made no hit in the part. Garrick was then giving his farewell performances; and when, in May, 1776, he revived the 'Suspicious Husband' to play Ranger, he cast her as Mrs. Strictland—with a line to herself in the bills. She had other parts of no great value, and she played Lady Anne to his Richard III. Then Garrick retired, and Sheridan, Linley and Ford succeeded him. Plainly enough, Garrick had not seen—as indeed, how should he?—what she was capable of; he seems not to have recommended her especially to the new manager; and in the summer, while she was acting at Birmingham, she received an official letter from the prompter of Drury Lane, acquainting her, that her services would be no longer required. "It was a stunning and cruel blow," she wrote, years afterward, in the autobiographic fragment which Campbell used; "it was very near destroying me. My blighted prospects, indeed, induced a state of mind that preyed upon my health, and for a year and a

half I was supposed to be hastening to a decline."

For six years Mrs. Siddons remained in the provinces, playing chiefly at York and at Bath, both theatrical towns of high repute, and her reputation increased constantly. Boaden records, that she even ventured to appear as Hamlet—just as Charlotte Cushman acted both Romeo and Wolsey—an effort more curious than valuable. She strove steadily to perfect herself in her art, and she had her reward. In time there came an offer of a three years' engagement, from the new managers of Drury Lane, and for the sake of her children, so she says, she accepted it. She took leave of her friends at Bath, in a poetical address of her own composing quite as personal as the song of Mr. Siddons of ten years before. She had promised to produce three reasons for leaving Bath, and she kept her word, bringing forward her three children—

These are the moles that heave me from your side,
Where I was rooted, where I could have died.

Mrs. Siddons reappeared at Drury Lane Theater, Oct. 10, 1782, as Isabella in Southerne's 'Fatal Marriage.' During her

absence her powers had matured, and her success was instant and indisputable. In the next three weeks, she repeated the part eight times; and on Oct. 30, she appeared in the 'Grecian Daughter.' Then she was seen as Jane Shore, and as Belvidere (in 'Venice Preserved'). In these she sustained and deepened the impression she had made as Isabella; they were all pathetic and tear-compelling characters, and never before had their tragic force been so well revealed. She became the social, as well as the theatrical, celebrity of the hour. She acted eighty nights in that season, and fifty-three in the next, appearing in a greater variety of plays, including two of Shakspere's, 'Measure for Measure' and 'King John,' in which she was Isabella and Constance. During this second season, Sir Joshua Reynolds painted her as the Tragic Muse. "When I attended him for the first sitting," she wrote, (Campbell, i. 242) "after more gratifying encomiums than I can now repeat, he took me by the hand, saying 'Ascend your undisputed throne, and graciously bestow upon me some good idea of the Tragic Muse.' I walked up the steps, and instantly seated myself in the

attitude in which the Tragic Muse now appears. This idea satisfied him so well, that without one moment's hesitation he determined not to alter it." When the picture was finisht, he told her that the colors would remain unfaded as long as the canvas would keep them together, gallantly adding, "And, to confirm my opinion, here is my name; for I have resolved to go down to posterity on the hem of your garment:"—it is to be noted that Sir Joshua seldom signed his pictures. When Garrick's 'Jubilee' was revived, which was a sort of pageant or procession of the whole company, in the costumes of the chief Shaksperean characters—not wholly unlike the *cérémonie* still seen on set occasions at the Théatre Français—Mrs. Siddons was drawn in a car as the Tragic Muse.

In the succeeding seasons, she appeared as Lady Macbeth, as Queen Katharine and as Volumnia to the Coriolanus of John Kemble. In the winter of 1789-90, she withdrew from Drury Lane, and acted only occasionally in the provinces. While she was in Birmingham, she was asked to buy a stucco bust of herself; it could not have been a striking likeness, as the shopman did not rec-

ognize her. The actress could not help thinking she could do better; and from that time on, she busied herself with sculpture, as Mélingue and Mme. Sarah-Bernhardt have done in our day, and as Mr. Jefferson amused himself with painting. In the Dyce Library at South Kensington, there is her own bust of herself. No doubt the study of sculpture was of use to her, altho her attitudes had always been statuesque. She told Lord Lansdowne, so Moore records, "that the first thing that suggested to her the mode of expressing intensity of feeling, was the position of some of the Egyptian statues, with the arms close down by the side, and the hands clencht." Campbell was with her when she first visited the Louvre and saw the Apollo Belvidere; she remained a long time before the statue, and said, at last, "What a great idea it gives us of God, to think that he has made a human being capable of fashioning so divine a form!" She played Hermione in the 'Winter's Tale,' March 25, 1802, and, in the great scene, as Campbell says, "lookt the statue, even to literal illusion; and, whilst its drapery hid her lower limbs, it showed a beauty of head,

neck, shoulders and arms, that Praxiteles might have studied." Boaden declares, that upon "the magical words, pronounced by Pauline, 'Music, awake her: strike!' the sudden action of the head, absolutely *startled,* as tho such a miracle had really vivified the marble."

In 1803, John Kemble bought one-sixth of Covent Garden theater, and Mrs. Siddons and Charles Kemble joined him. She acted at Covent Garden every season until 1812, when on June 29, she took her farewell in a poetic address, written by her nephew, Horace Twiss. She had been acting in London, at the head of the profession, for thirty years. At intervals she was seen again on the stage at benefit performances; between 1813 and 1819, she acted perhaps twenty times in London and Edinburgh. These occasions were probably a welcome relief to the monotony of her retirement. Fanny Kemble declared that "the vapid vacuity of the last years of my aunt Siddons' life, had made a profound impression upon me,—her apparent deafness and indifference to everything, which I attributed (unjustly, perhaps) less to her advanced age and impaired

powers than to what I supposed the withering and drying influence of the overstimulating atmosphere of emotion, excitement, and admiration in which she had passed her life," ('Records of a Girlhood,' p. 223). She died May 31, 1831, in London, at the age of seventy-six.

Mrs. Siddons was probably the greatest actress the world has ever seen. Her voice was rich and warm and free from the weakness which kept John Kemble constantly on his guard; Erskine said that he had studied her cadences and intonation, and that to the harmony of her periods and pronunciation he was indebted for his best displays. Boaden declares that there never was a better stage figure than hers. She was strong, supple, graceful and easy in her person. Her face was "so thoroly harmonized when quiescent and so expressive when impassioned that most people think her more beautiful than she is." Altho she had humor in private life, she failed to reveal it on the stage; her comedy was not mirthful. And she seems to have been a little lacking in variety. But these trifles were all that detracted from her perfection. In youth she

gave a pathos to the young and lovely heroines of tragedy that they had never known before; and in the maturity of her powers she arose to the severe majesty of the highest histrionic genius. She filled exactly Talma's ideal of tragic acting,—"the union of grandeur without pomp and nature without triviality." Of her Lady Macbeth, her greatest part, we are fortunate in having her own analysis (see Campbell's 'Life of Mrs. Siddons,' vol. ii, p. 10); but Fanny Kemble anticipated Fleeming Jenkin in declaring that Mrs. Siddons' "analysis of the part of Lady Macbeth was to be found *alone* in her representation of it—of the magnificence of which the essay which she has left upon the character gives not the faintest idea." Fanny Kemble also dismisses her aunt's analysis of Queen Katharine as equally "feeble" and superficial." It may be noted that the essay written on Othello by Salvini, the most superb of later impersonations of the part, is quite as negligible.

"Next to the pleasure of running a man down," said Byron, "the critics like nothing so much as vanity of writing him up; but once up, and fixt there, he is a mark for their

arrows ever afterwards." It is perhaps the highest possible testimony to Mrs. Siddons' merits as an artist, and to her character as a woman that the only fault found with her was that she was a little grasping in money matters. The same accusation was brought against Rachel and Charlotte Cushman; and in no case, probably, had it any more basis than the charge of parsimony often urged against Garrick. Her life was written by Thomas Campbell, and he dedicated it to Samuel Rogers, beginning his dedicatory letter with the assertion—"I have often heard you say, that rare as it was to meet with so gifted a genius as that of Mrs. Siddons, it was almost equally so to meet in human nature with so much candid and benignant singleness of mind as belonged to her personal character." The longer one labors over the abundant records of her life, the more emphatically is one inclined to echo this saying of one poet written down by another.

II. H. C. Fleeming Jenkin.

THE fundamental principles of the art of acting are less widely apprehended than those of any other of the arts; and it is rare indeed to find a clear understanding of these principles in the conversations or in the compositions of any one not actively engaged in the practical work of the theater, as an author, as an actor, or as a stage-manager. Even among the professionals of the playhouse, capable of applying these principles more or less satisfactorily in their regular routine, there are very few who are gifted with the critical faculty and the literary ability, which would enable them to deduce and to declare those laws of the art of acting, which they are competent to apply instinctively. They may know what ought to be done, without being able to proclaim the theory underlying the intuitive belief in obedience to which they work. If this comprehensive understanding of the basic laws of acting is very infrequent among professionals of acknowledged distinction, there is

occasion for surprize that we should find it possest by an amateur, an outsider like Fleeming Jenkin, by vocation an engineer and by avocation an untiring investigator into the principles of several of the arts, notably that of the playwright and that of the player. His possession of this comprehensive understanding of acting is disclosed in these two papers on Mrs. Siddons as an actress in Shakspere's tragedies; and it is proclaimed in the memoir of him written by his intimate friend, Robert Louis Stevenson.

Henry Charles Fleeming Jenkin was born in 1833 and he died in 1885. His mother was the author of two or three novels, of which 'Who breaks, pays' is the least forgotten. Educated partly in his native Scotland and partly in Italy, he served an apprenticeship in engineering; and in 1859 he became associated with Lord Kelvin in the development of the telegraph cable and in the advance of electric science. In 1865 he was appointed professor of engineering at University College in London; and in 1868 he accepted the same professorship at the University of Edinburgh. He contributed abundantly to the literature of his profes-

sion; and he invented a system of conveying goods by electric devices, in which he was aided by Gordon Wigan, (son of Alfred Wigan, the actor). But he did not allow his profession, keenly as he was interested in it, to absorb all his abounding energy. He wrote a play on the story of patient Griselda; he worked out a theory of English versification; he analized several Greek tragedies; he investigated Greek costume; he discust the atomic theory of Lucretius and the origin of species of Darwin; and he stage-managed frequent private theatricals. His various activities are revealed in the two volumes of his literary and scientific papers collected after his death.

The first of these volumes contained the memoir prepared at the request of his widow by his former pupil, Stevenson, himself the child of a long family of engineers. Stevenson had earlier commemorated the brilliant conversational powers of his friend by presenting him as Cockshot in the pair of sparkling essays entitled 'Talk and Talkers.' Perhaps one of those who came to know Fleeming Jenkin in the last years of his life and to appreciate his many-sided intelli-

gence, his alert wit and his unfailing keenness, may be permitted here to suggest that Fleeming Jenkin was not altogether fortunate in his biographer, in spite of Stevenson's loyalty to his dead friend and in spite of his manifest desire to show this friend for what he was. Perhaps a narrative by a less expert pen would have presented a larger figure,—or at least a figure less obscured by the personality of the biographer himself. It would not be quite fair to suggest that there is any hint of patronizing in Stevenson's attitude; and yet it is not unjust to say that he seems at times to be a little condescending;—and we have his own assertion that the pleasures of condescension are strangely one-sided.

I did not know Fleeming Jenkin intimately, but I had the pleasure of meeting him frequently at luncheon during several successive summers; and I can recall my surprized delight in his scintillating discourse the first time I met him in the dingy smoking-room of the Savile Club in 1881. We had fallen into talk over our coffee, without any formal introduction, as is the kindly custom of the Savillians; and I remember the eagerness with which I slipt into the adjoining-room to

inquire from Andrew Lang the name of the brilliant conversationalist, with whom I had unwittingly foregathered. As I grew to know him better, I came to have a high regard, not only for the marvellous range of his interests and of his attainments, but also for the man himself, for his character, for his integrity and his sincerity.

Our topics were many and various, and the art of acting was only one of them. Yet this tended to recur frequently since his associate, Gordon Wigan, had inherited a knowledge of its principles inferior only to Fleeming Jenkin's own; and often we had for a fourth in our discussions Walter Harries Pollock, the son of the editor of Macready's 'Reminiscences' and then serving as the dramatic critic of the *Saturday Review*.

Stevenson is absolutely in accord with the fact when he tells us that Fleeming Jenkin "was all his life a lover of the play and all that belonged to it. Dramatic literature he knew fully. He was one of the not very numerous people who can read a play; a knack, the fruit of much knowledge and some imagination, comparable to that of reading-score." Stevenson's own innocence in regard

to the drama is revealed in his next remark: "Few men better understood the artificial principles on which a play is good or bad, few more unaffectedly enjoyed a piece of any merit of construction." The word *artificial* here is curiously ill-chosen, as the principles on which a play is good or bad are no more "artificial" than those on which a picture, a statue or a novel is good or bad. "Acting," so Stevenson continued, "had always, since Rachel and the 'Marsellaise,' a particular power on him. 'If I do not cry at the play,' he used to say, 'I want my money back.' "

This is significant in that it tends to explain the emphasis Fleeming Jenkin placed on the supreme importance of the emotional appeal in a play. This he dwelt upon more than once in the incidental remarks upon playwriting which illuminate the two papers on Mrs. Siddons; and here his attitude is just the opposite of that which the ill-informed critic of the drama from a purely literary standpoint is likely to take,—oblivious of the fact that Jenkin's attitude is that from which Aristotle always considered the effectiveness of a tragic story. Like Aris-

totle, Fleeming Jenkin had had a severe training in scientific modes of thought; and perhaps it is not fanciful to find in this schooling an explanation of their ability to pierce to the center whenever they undertook an inquiry into the laws which govern artistic achievement.

Keen as Fleeming Jenkin was in his analysis of the problems of playmaking, he was quite as clear in his disentangling of the principles of acting; and in this pair of papers on Mrs. Siddons he had a most excellent text. She was the greatest tragic actress ever seen on our English-speaking stage; and she was at her best in the mightiest of Shakspere's tragic women. It is a commonplace that the actor leaves only a name behind him, since his work necessarily dies when he does; and that succeeding generations must take his reputation on trust, since the only witnesses who might be called in rebuttal are all dead. In the future the phonograph may preserve for us the voice of an honored performer; and thus supply material for opinion about the quality of his tones and the justice of his readings. At best, these will be but specimen bricks, and

we shall still lack the larger outlines of the performance as a whole. Yet there is phenomenal value in such a record as that which Bell made in the theater itself, and while he was actually under the spell of Mrs. Siddons' enchantment. In these notes we are told how she stood and how she lookt, what gestures she made and what pauses she employed to give her words time to sink in. And these notes,—brief yet adequate for their purpose, in which Bell sets down what he saw and what he heard and what he was made to feel, —Fleeming Jenkin interprets for us, making us sharers in the pleasure of the performance and appreciators of at least a few of its manifold merits.

It was fortunate for all of us who are interested in the arts of the theater, that Bell was moved to make these notes and that they were preserved almost by accident; and it was doubly fortunate that they fell at last into the hands of Fleeming Jenkin, than whom no one was better qualified to appreciate their abiding importance. It is greatly to be desired that observers as competent and as careful as Bell may be moved to make a like record of the best performances of

the best actors of our own time; but perhaps it is too much to hope that these contemporary documents may be interpreted to later students of the stage by a critic as gifted as Fleeming Jenkin. Critics of his insight and attainments come as spies and not in batallions.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

(August, 1915.)

Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth

Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth

WHEN any great work of art perishes from among us, we not only grieve, but we rebel against the decree of fate. The wars, the traffic, the mechanical arts of old, nay even the men and women, wither into an oblivion which is not painful but kindly. We sigh and smile and acquiesce—better so, for here was nothing fitted to endure for ever.

They had their time, as we have ours, and who would wish that the strife, the bustle, the men of to-day should last for ever? But the destruction of any beautiful thing, whether it be the work of art or nature, fills us, on the contrary, with sickening regret. The temple, statue, picture gone imply a loss of joy to uncounted generations. We suffer real pain when we think of lost tragedies by Sophocles, and our whole classical system of education is a protest that tho kingdoms,

peoples, tongues may die, their works of beauty shall endure.

If this be our feeling as to the more durable works of art, what shall we say of those triumphs which by their very nature last no longer than the action which creates them—the triumphs of the orator, the singer or the actor? There is an anodyne in the words "must be so," "inevitable," and there is even some absurdity in longing for the impossible. This anodyne and our sense of humor temper the unhappiness we feel when, after hearing some great performance, we leave the theater and think, "Well, this great thing has been, and all that is now left of it is the feeble print upon my brain, the little thrill which memory will send along my nerves, mine, and my neighbor's; as we live longer the print and thrill must grow feebler, and when we pass away the impress of the great artist will vanish from the world." The regret that a great art should in its nature be transitory explains the lively interest which many feel in reading anecdotes or descriptions of a great actor, and it is this feeling which prompts the publication of the following notes on Mrs. Siddons' acting made by

an eye-witness of ability and true artistic feeling.

The public of to-day are perhaps hardly aware of the height to which the art of acting may rise. Yet those who have been familiar with the creations of Rachel and Salvini will not only credit the assertion that the genius of Mrs. Siddons in representing the characters of Murphy, Lillo, Southerne, and Otway, was greatly superior to that of the writers, but that, even when representing Shakspere, she supplied much which enricht the conceptions of the poet. To-day we often speak of an actor as the mere interpreter of Shakspere. We are apt to imagine that there is some one Hamlet or Lady Macbeth, a creature of Shakspere's brain, an *eidolon* which the actor must of necessity endeavor to represent, his success being measured by the approach which he makes to this unattainable ideal. Those, however, who have seen the acting of the last thirty years in Paris will know that this view of the actor's province is far from true when he interprets even the best modern authors. They know that an actor, when he receives the manuscript, has to create his part in the sense of

conceiving a complete human being who, under the given circumstances, employs the words which the author has supplied. They know that no critic could, by reading a play, evolve a portrait of the man whom an original actor will represent as the embodiment of some new part. They know that each new actor of real merit recreates the persons of the older drama, sending traditions to the winds and producing a new person on the stage using the old words, but with marvellous differences of manner, voice, gesture, and intention. They know that there is not merely one good way of representing a great part, but as many ways as there are great actors. Each actor is bound so to fashion his conception that his own physical attributes and mental powers will lend themselves to its execution; and thus the great parts on the French stage have bound up with them a long series of portraits each representing the creation of a separate actor—all the creations good and to be judged of on their own merits, not by reference simply to the mind of the author.

In small parts, and in the lower walks of the art, the English public will admit this

truth readily. No one can suppose that the writer of 'Rip van Winkle' conceived his man with the tones and gestures which we find so admirable in Mr. Jefferson; but the majesty of Shakspere's name overawes us when we hear that a Mrs. Siddons created a part which Shakspere wrote—when we are told that an actor's first business is not to think how Shakspere conceived his character as standing or looking, but how he, the actor, can make a real human being stand and look while speaking Shakspere's words. Yet the words of the part do not by themselves supply the actor with one-hundredth part of the actions he has to perform. Every single word has to be spoken with just intonation and emphasis, while not a single intonation or emphasis is indicated by the printed copy. The actor must find the expression of face, the attitude of body, the action of the limbs, the pauses, the hurries—the life, in fact. There is no logical process by which all these things can be evolved out of the mere words of a part. The actor must go direct to nature and his own heart for the tones and action by which he is to move his audience; these his author cannot give him, and in cre-

ating these, if he be a great actor, his art may be supremely great.

The distinction between the mechanical arts and what are commonly called the fine arts lies in the creation or invention required by the artist as compared with the skill or dexterity which are alone required by the craftsman. The one copies or executes; the other creates, invents, or *finds* the treasure which he gives to the world. Arts are great or small as the thing created is noble or petty; the artist is true or false as he possesses more or less of this creative power, for the exercise of which he in all cases requires skill more or less mechanical, which technical skill is often called "art" as if there were no other. This technical skill can be taught and must be learnt by every artist. The poetic creative power can never be taught, tho in a sense it is learnt from every sight, sound, and feeling; but this greater art is learnt unconsciously, and few have the power to learn the lesson.

Judged by this canon, the art of the actor may claim high rank whenever its scope is the presentment of the highest human types. To truly great actors, the words they

have to speak are but opportunities of creating these types—opportunities in the sense that a beautiful model, a fine landscape, are opportunities to the painter. In these he finds his picture, in those the actor finds his person; but the dramatist does less for the actor than nature for the painter. It is the involuntary unconscious perception of this truth which makes men accord a generous recognition to artists such as Mrs. Siddons while treating, not without justice, the rank and file of the profession as mere skilled workmen.

It is probable, nay certain, that in writing the words to be uttered by each character, a great author has vividly present to his mind an ideal man or woman speaking these with natural and effective tones and gestures—perhaps in Shakspere's case, tho not in others, the best tones and gestures possible; perhaps, however, with tones and gestures so old-fashioned that they would not move us now; what is certain is that we have no means of discovering these; indeed, he could not himself have imparted them to a fellow-actor. Moreover, when writing the words of Macbeth, he cannot have had present to

his mind all the gestures and expressions of Lady Macbeth as she listened. Yet this by-play of the great actress was such that the audience, looking at her, forgot to listen to Macbeth. Corneille never thought of how Camille would listen to the account of the death of her lover in 'Les Horaces,' or, if he thought of it, his conception must have been a mere sketch as compared with the long and marvellous scene which Rachel, playing the part, showed to the astonisht audience.

In truth, the spectators do not know the marvellous study which a great actor applies to every word of a speech. Some think that the study consists in finding out what the author meant the hero to say or express by given words. Sometimes this demands study; more often with great writers it is as plain as can be, requiring no study. When the meaning is understood, next comes the consideration of the feeling which the speech implies or requires in the speaker. The conception of this is far more difficult than the simple interpretation of the words, and will alter with each new actor; not differing *toto coelo,* but differing in shade, color and inten-

sity. Any one of us can understand the reasoning in "To be or not to be." Very few of us can form any vivid conception of the state of Hamlet's mind, sentence by sentence, word by word, as he utters them. Of the few who can form any conception beyond a mere colorless, shadeless, pointless impression of gloom or bitterness, each one must of necessity form a distinct and new conception. In order that such a speech may sway a house, it must represent a series of emotions, each intense, natural and noble—each succeeding the other in a natural sequence. After the speech has been understood and the feelings to which it corresponds conceived, comes a task of ineffable difficulty—that of finding tones, look and action, which shall represent those feelings. The author gives an outline, which the actor must fill up with color, light and shade, so as to show a concrete fact; and no two actors can or ought to do this in one and the same way. Let any reader who doubts this—who thinks, for instance, that there is some one Hamlet, Shakspere's Hamlet, who could only speak the speech in one attitude, with one set of tones—open the book, and in the solitude of his chamber try

first to find out the emotions which Shakspere meant his Hamlet to feel, and then try to express those emotions in tones which would indicate them to others. If honest and clever, he will find out after half an hour's study how little the author has done for the actor, how much the actor is called upon to do for the author.

These views will find their illustration in the remarkable notes by Professor G. J. Bell on Mrs. Siddons' acting, which are now publisht for the first time, having been kindly placed at the disposal of the writer by his surviving son, Mr. John Bell, of the Calcutta bar. Written apparently on the spot, and during the red-hot glow of appreciation, they bring the great actress before us in a way which no labored criticism or description could do. They show how noble an art she practised, and might almost inspire some young and generous mind with the power once more to create heroic men and women on the stage.

Professor G. J. Bell, brother of the great surgeon, Sir Charles Bell, was Professor of Scottish Law in the University of Edinburgh, and author of 'Commentaries on the Law

of Scotland,' a standard work still in high repute. He was well known by his friends to be a man of fine taste and keen sensibility, as is indeed proved by these notes. They were made in 1809, or about that time, and are contained in three volumes, lettered 'Siddons,' which of themselves prove the great interest taken in Mrs. Siddons' acting. They contain acting editions of the plays in which she appeared, edited by Mrs. Inchbald. Professor Bell was himself in the habit of reading aloud, and, besides critical remarks, he has noted in many places the rise or fall of Mrs. Siddons' voice, putting a mark / for a rise, and \ for a fall. The words on which the emphasis fell are underlined. The following is an introductory note on 'Macbeth':

Of Lady Macbeth there is not a great deal in this play, but the wonderful genius of Mrs. Siddons makes it the whole. She makes it tell the whole story of the ambitious project, the disappointment, the remorse, the sickness and despair of guilty ambition, the attainment of whose object is no cure for the wounds of the spirit. Macbeth in Kemble's hand is only a co-operating part. I can conceive Garrick to have sunk Lady Macbeth as much as Mrs. Siddons does Macbeth, yet when you see Mrs. Siddons play this part you scarcely

can believe that any acting could make her part subordinate. Her turbulent and inhuman strength of spirit does all. She turns Macbeth to her purpose, makes him her mere instrument, guides, directs, and inspires the whole plot. Like Macbeth's evil genius she hurries him on in the mad career of ambition and cruelty from which his nature would have shrunk. The flagging of her spirit, the melancholy and dismal blank beginning to steal upon her, is one of the finest lessons of the drama. The moral is complete in the despair of Macbeth, the fond regret of both for that state of innocence from which their wild ambition has hurried them to their undoing.

The writer of this note, obviously, like Milton, considered a tragedy the moralest of poems, as indeed it is; but special attention may be paid to two points. First, Mrs. Siddons did not herself conceive Shakspere's Lady Macbeth as turbulent and with inhuman strength; she represented her as a woman of this type because this conception suited her physical powers and appearance. But in her own memoranda, publisht in her life by Campbell, she speaks thus of Lady Macbeth's beauty:

According to my notion it is of that character which I believe is generally allowed to be most captivating to the other sex—fair, feminine, nay perhaps even fragile—

Fair as the forms that, wove in fancy's loom,
Float in light visions round the poet's head.

Such a combination only, respectable in energy and strength of mind, and captivating in feminine loveliness, could have composed a charm of such potency as to fascinate the mind of a hero so dauntless, a character so amiable, so honorable as Macbeth.

There is something to be said for Mrs. Siddons' argument that an overbearing woman could never have guided Macbeth; but this point is for the moment of secondary interest, compared with the light which her remark throws on the statement made above, that there is not one conception which alone the actor must form of a given part. Here we have a great actress forming two distinct conceptions: for no one can believe that if Mrs. Siddons had been able to appear the fair and fragile beauty she conceived, she would have used a single gesture or one inflexion similar to those employed when she was representing turbulent inhuman strength.

The second point of interest in Professor Bell's note is, that the melancholy and dismal blank beginning to steal on Lady Macbeth is more the creation of Siddons than of Shakspere. There is nothing in the text to contra-

dict it, but little to indicate it. This will become more apparent when we reach the detailed notes.

A second notice in another copy of 'Macbeth' appears as follows:

> Mrs. Siddons is not before an audience. Her mind wrought up in high conception of her part, her eye never wandering, never for a moment idle, passion and sentiment continually betraying themselves. Her words are the accompaniments of her thoughts, scarcely necessary, you would imagine, to the expression, but highly raising it, and giving the full force of poetical effect.

What a tribute! Shakspere's words hardly necessary! And this was written by a man who idolized Shakspere.

Professor Bell elsewhere remarks:

> A just observation that it is unhappy when the part of Lady Macbeth is in the hands of a Siddons, and Macbeth (with?) an inferior actor. She then becomes not the affectionate aider of her husband's ambition, but the fell monster who tempts him to transgress, making him the mere instrument of her wild and uncontrollable ambition.

The notes on this play will now be given, only so much of each scene being quoted as is necessary to render the notes intelligible. The text of Shakspere is given as found in the edition annotated by Professor Bell.

ACT I.

SCENE 5.—*Macbeth's Castle at Inverness.*
Enter LADY MACBETH,[2] *reading a letter.*

Lady. "They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the *perfectest* report, they have *more* in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the *wonder of* it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightest not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, *and shalt be*[3]
What thou art promised:[4] yet do I fear
thy nature;

[2] Mrs. Siddons.
[3] Exalted prophetic tone, as if the whole future were present to her soul.
[4] A slight tincture of contempt thruout.

It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great:
Art not without ambition, but without
The *illness* should attend it:[5] what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily`; wouldst not *play* false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'd'st have, great Glamis,
That which cries "Thus thou must do, if thou have it;"
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour *my*[6] spirits in thine ear;
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round
Which *fate*[7] and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

[5] Here and in the night scenes it is plain that he had imparted to her his ambitious thoughts and wishes.

[6] Starts into higher animation.

[7] The whole of this following scene a picture of this highest working of the soul. Kemble plays it not well, yet some things good. Much of the effect depends on the fire

Enter SEYTON.

What is your tidings?

Seyton. The king comes here to-night.

Lady. *Thou'rt mad to say it;*[8]

[9]Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.[9]

Seyton. So please you, it is true: our thane is coming;
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

Lady. Give him tending;
He brings great news.

[*Exit* SEYTON.

[10]The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the *fatal* entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. [11]Come, all you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,

---

which she strikes into him, and which the player must make out.

[8] Loud.

[9] Soft, as if correcting herself, and under the tone of reasoning concealing sentiments almost disclosed.

[10] After a long pause when the messenger has retired. Indicates her fell purpose settled and about to be accomplished.

[11] In a low voice—a whisper of horrid determination.

And fill me from the crown to the toe top-
full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep pace be-
tween
The effect and it![11] [12]Come to my woman's
breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering
ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick
night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it
makes,
Nor heaven peep thru the blanket of the
dark,
To cry "Hold, hold!"[12]

Enter MACBETH.

[13]Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by *the all-hail hereafter!*

[12] Voice quite supernatural, as in a horrible dream. Chilled with horror by the slow hollow whisper of this wonderful creature.

[13] Loud, triumphant and wild in her air.

Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady.[14] And when goes hence?

Macbeth. To-morrow, as he purposes.

Lady. O, never` . . .
(never) Shall sun that morrow see`![15]
[16]Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time;[16] bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,

---

[14] High purpose working in her mind.

[15] O, never`. A long pause, turned from him, her eye steadfast. Strong dwelling emphasis on 'never,' with deep downward inflection, 'never shall sun that morrow see!' Low, very slow sustained voice, her eye and her mind occupied steadfastly in the contemplation of her horrible purpose, pronunciation almost syllabic, not unvaried. Her self-collected solemn energy, her fixed posture, her determined eye and full deep voice of fixed resolve never should be forgot, cannot be conceived nor described.

[16] Observing the effect of what she has said on him, now first turning her eye upon his face.

[17]*But be the serpent under't.* He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;
[18]Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.[18]

Macbeth. We will speak further.

Lady. Only look up clear;
[19]To alter favor ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me.[19] [*Exeunt.*

Does not the reader feel that in these close personal observations is to be found a far better conception of what the genius of Siddons could do than is given in the long lives by Campbell and Boaden? Mrs. Siddons appears to have repeated the word "never" before "shall sun that morrow see." This appears not only from note (15), but from a manuscript insertion of a second "never" after the pause indicated above. The next notes are on the sixth scene, where Lady Macbeth addresses Duncan.

[17] Very slow, severe and cruel expression, her gesture impressive.

[18] Voice changes to assurance and gratulation.

[19] Leading him out, cajoling him, her hand on his shoulder clapping him. This vulgar—gives a mean con-

Lady. [20]All our service
In every point twice done and then done
double
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honors deep and broad, where-
with
Your majesty loads our house: for those of
old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.[20]

At her exit comes this note:

Bows gracefully to the king, when she gives him the *pas* in entering. Then graciously and sweetly to the nobles before she follows the king.

On Macbeth's speech, Scene 7, beginning
If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere
well
It were done quickly,
there is the following:

Kemble speaks this, as if he had never seen his sister, like a *speech* to be recited. None of that hesitation and working of the mind which in Mrs. Siddons seems to inspire the words as the natural expression of the emotion.

---

ception of Macbeth, unlike the high mental working by which he is turned to her ambitious purpose.

[20] Dignified and simple. Beautifully spoken; quite musical in her tones and in the pronunciation, soothing and satisfying the ear.

After the entrance of Lady Macbeth the notes continue:

Lady. He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?[21]

Macbeth. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady. *Know* you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business:

[22]He hath honor'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,[22]
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady. [23]Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely?[24] From this time
Such I account thy love.[5] Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valor

[21] Eager whisper of anger and surprise.

[22] Here again Mrs. Siddons appears with all her inimitable expression of emotion. The sudden change from animated hope and surprise to disappointment, depression, contempt, and rekindling resentment, is beyond any powers but hers.

[23] Very cold, distant, and contemptuous.

[24] Determined air and voice. Then a tone of cold contemptuous reasoning.

As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have
that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat i' the adage?
Macbeth. [25]Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.[25]
Lady. What beast was it then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you
would
Be so much more than man. Nor time nor
place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make
both:
They have made themselves, and that their
fitness now
Does unmake you.[26] [27]I have given suck,
and know

[25] Kemble speaks this well.

[26] Cold, still, and distant; slow with remarkable distinctness and great earnestness.

[27] She has been at a distant part of the stage. She now comes close to him—an entire change of manner, looks for some time in his face, then speaks.

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks
me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless
gums
And dashed the brains out, had I but so
sworn as *you*
Have done to this.
Macbeth. If we should fail?
Lady. [28]We fail`!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll *not* fail.[28] When Duncan is
asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard
journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbec only;[29] when in swinish sleep

[28] *We fail`*. Not surprise, strong downward inflection, bowing with her hands down, the palm upward. Then voice of strong assurance, 'When Duncan,' &c. This spoken near to him, and in a low earnest whisper of discovery she discloses her plan.

[29] Pauses as if trying the effect on him. Then renews her plan more earnestly, low still, but with increasing confidence. Thruout this scene she feels her way, observes the wavering of his mind; suits her earnestness and whole manner to it. With contempt, affection, reason, the con-

Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The *unguarded Duncan'? what* not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

Macbeth. Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have marked with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done't?

Lady. Who *dares* receive it other,[30]
As we shall make our griefs and clamor roar
Upon his death?

Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.
[*Exeunt.*

The next note refers to Macbeth's dagger scene, and is very interesting, altho re-

viction of her well-concerted plan, the assurance of success which her wonderful tones inspire, she turns him to her purpose with an art in which the player shares largely in the poet's praise.

[30] Pause. Look of great confidence, much dignity of mien. In "dares" great and imperial dignity.

ferring more immediately to Kemble than to his sister: Professor bell says:

There is much stage trick and very cold in this scene of Kemble—walks across the stage, his eyes on the ground, starts at the sight of the servant, whom he forgets for the purpose, renews his walk, throws up his face, sick, sighs, then a start theatric and then the dagger. Why can't he learn from his sister?

Charles Bell thinks (and justly) that he should stand or sit musing, his eye fixed on vacancy, then a more piercing look to seem to see what still is in the mind's eye only, characterised by the bewildered look which accompanies the want of a fixed object of vision; yet the eye should not roll or start. N. B.: Mrs. Siddons in reading 'Hamlet' showed how inimitably she could by a mere look, while sitting in a chair, paint to the spectators a horrible shadow in her mind.

At the point where Macbeth says "there's no such thing," Professor Bell continues:

Kemble here hides his eyes with his hand, then fearfully looks up, and peeping first over then under his hand, as if for an insect whose buzzing had disturbed him, he removes his hand, looks more abroad, and then recovers—very poor—the recovery should be by an effort of the mind. It is not the absence of a physical corporeal dagger, but the returning tone of a disordered fancy. A change in the look, the clearing of a bewildered imagination, a more steadfast and natural aspect, the hand drawn across the eyes or forehead, with something of a bitter smile.

These remarks illustrate well what was said before as to the nature of an actor's study. Professor Bell had reached the second stage, and knew well what the actor should feel. The third stage, how to show it, can only be acted, not described. With the entrance of Lady Macbeth the notes become detailed.

Scene 2.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady.[31] That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quenched them hath given me fire. *Hark! Peace!*[32]
It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. *He is about it:*[33]
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,

[31] With a ghastly horrid smile.
[32] Hsh! Hsh! Whisper.
[33] Breathes with difficulty, hearkens towards the door. Whisper horrible.

That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macbeth. [*Within*] Who's there? what, ho!

Lady. [34]Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed
Confound us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss them. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.[35]—*My husband!*

Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. [36]I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?[35]

Macbeth. When?[36]

[34] The finest agony; tossing of the arms.

[35] Agonised suspense, as if speechless with uncertainty whether discovered.

[36] Macbeth speaks all this like some horrid secret—a whisper in the dark.

Lady. Now.

Macbeth. As I descended?[37]

Lady. Ay.

Macbeth. Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady. Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight.

[*Looking on his hands.*

Lady. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth. [38]There's one did laugh in his sleep, and one cried "Murder!"

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:

But they did say their prayers, and address'd them

Again to sleep.

Lady. There are two lodged together.

Macbeth. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other;

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:

---

[37] Very well spoken; horrid whisper.

[38] Mrs. Siddons here displays her wonderful power and knowledge of nature. As if her inhuman strength of spirit overcome by the contagion of his remorse and terror. Her arms about her neck and bosom, shuddering.

Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"

Lady. Consider it not so deeply.

Macbeth. But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?

I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

Lady. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; *so, it will make us mad.*[38]

Macbeth. [39]Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!"

. . . to all the house
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more."[39]

Lady. *Who* was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
[40]You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.[40]

---

[39] Her horror changes to agony and alarm at his derangement, uncertain what to do; calling up the resources of her spirit.

[40] She comes near him, attempts to call back his wandering thoughts to ideas of common life. Strong emphasis

[41]*Why did you bring these daggers from the place?*
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.
Macbeth. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.
Lady. Infirm of purpose!
[42]Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil.[42] *If he do bleed,*[43]
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
For it must seem their guilt.
[*Exit. Knocking within*
Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?

---

on *who*. Speaks forcibly into his ear, looks at him steadfastly. "Why, worthy thane," &c.: fine remonstrance, tone fit to work on his mind.

[41] Now only at leisure to observe the daggers.

[42] Seizing the daggers very contemptuously.

[43] As stealing out she turns towards him stooping, and with the finger pointed to him with malignant energy says, "If he do bleed," &c.

What hands are here? ha! they pluck out
mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this
blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand
will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady. [44]My *hands* are of your color; but I shame
To wear a *heart* so white. [*Knocking within.*] I hear a knocking
At the south entry; retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*] Hark, more knocking,
Get on your nightgowns, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macbeth. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. [*Knocking within.*
Wake Duncan with this knocking! Oh, would thou couldst![44] [*Exeunt.*

[44] Contempt. Kemble plays well here; stands motionless;

The notes are resumed where Lady Macbeth enters as queen.

ACT III.

SCENE 2.—*The Palace.*

Enter LADY MACBETH, *as Queen, and* SEYTON.

Lady. [45]Is Banquo gone from court?

Seyton. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

Seyton. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*

Lady. [46]Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.[46]

---

his bloody hands near his face; his eye fixed, agony in his brow; quite rooted to the spot. She at first directs him with an assured and confident air. Then alarm steals on her, increasing to agony lest his reason be quite gone and discovery be inevitable. Strikes him on the shoulder, pulls him from his fixed posture, forces him away, he talking as he goes.

[45] Great dignity and solemnity of voice; nothing of the joy of gratified ambition.

[46] Very mournful.

Enter MACBETH.

[47]How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what's done is done.[47]

Macbeth. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly; better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie

[47] Still her accents very plaintive. This is one of the pasages in which her intense love of her husband should animate every word. It should not be contemptuous reproach, but deep sorrow and sympathy with his melancholy.

In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor
poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.
Lady. Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial[48] among your guests to-
night.
Macbeth. O, full of scorpions is my mind,
dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance,
live.
Lady [49]But in them nature's copy's not
eterne.

There are no further remarks on this scene.

In Scene 4, where at the banquet Macbeth speaks to the murderers, the remark is written: "During all this a growing uneasiness in her; at last she rises and speaks." Full notes are resumed towards the end of the scene, as follows:

[48] Mournful: a forced cheerfulness breaking thru it.
[49] A flash of her former spirit and energy.

[*The Ghost of* BANQUO *enters, and sits in* MACBETH'S *place.*

Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honor roof'd,
Were the graced persons of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!

Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your highness
To grace us with your royal company.

Macbeth. [50]The table's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macbeth. Where?

Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your highness?[50]

Macbeth. Which of you have done this?

Lennox. What, my good lord?

Macbeth. Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well.

[50] Her secret uneasiness very fine. Suppressed, but agitating her whole frame.

Lady. [51]Sit, worthy friends:—my lord is
often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you,
keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well: if you much note him,
You shall offend him, and extend his passion;
Feed, and regard him not. *Are you a
man?*[52]

Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare
look on that
Which might appal the devil.

Lady. [53]O, proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you
said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and
starts
(Impostors to true fear) would well become
A woman's story, at a winter's fire,[53]
Authorised by her grandam. Shame itself!
[54]Why do you make such faces? When all's
done,

---

[51] Descends.

[52] Comes up to him and catches his hand. Voice suppressed.

[53] Peevish and scornful.

[54] In his ear, as if to bring him back to objects of com-

You look but on a stool.[54]

Macbeth. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites.

[*Ghost vanishes.*

Lady. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady. *Fie, for shame!*[55]

Re-enter Ghost.

Macbeth. [56]Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.

Lady.[57] Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

---

mon life. Her anxiety makes you creep with apprehension: uncertain how to act. Her emotion keeps you breathless.

[55] Returns to her seat; this whispered.

[56] Her secret agony again agitates her.

[57] Rises and speaks sweetly to the company.

Macbeth. [58]What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhibit, then protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence![58]

[*Ghost vanishes.*

Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again.

Lady. You have displaced the mirth,
broke the good meeting,
With most admired disorder.

Macbeth. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me
strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,

[58] Macready plays this well. Even Kemble chid and scolded the ghost out! and rose in vehemence and courage as he went on. Macready began in the vehemence of despair, but, overcome by terror as he continued to gaze on the apparition, dropped his voice lower and lower till he became tremulous and inarticulate, and at last uttering a subdued cry of mortal agony and horror, he suddenly cast his mantle over his face, and sank back almost lifeless on his seat.

When now I think you can behold such
sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

Ross. What sights, my lord?

Lady. [59]I pray you, speak not; he grows
worse and worse;
Question enrages him. At once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Lennox. Good night; and better health
Attend his majesty!

Lady. A kind good night to all!

[*Exeunt all but* MACBETH
and LADY MACBETH.

Macbeth. It will have blood: they say
blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move and trees
to speak;
Augurs and understood relations have
By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks
brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the
night?

[59] Descends in great eagerness; voice almost choked with anxiety to prevent their questioning; alarm, hurry, rapid and convulsive as if afraid he should tell of the murder of Duncan.

Lady. [60]Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

Macbeth. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

Lady. Did you send to him, sir?

Macbeth. I hear it by the way, but I will send:
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
And betimes I will, unto the weird sisters:
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give way: I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

Lady.[61] You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

Macbeth. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse

[60] Very sorrowful. Quite exhausted.

[61] Feeble now, and as if preparing for her last sickness and final doom.

Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:
We are yet but young in deed.

[*Exeunt.*

It is curious to see by these last two notes, as by the introductory remarks, that Mrs. Siddons conveyed by her demeanor the impression of being already almost broken down, and quite as much in need of sleep as Macbeth. This preparation for the sleeping scene is a very fine idea, and hardly seems to be suggested in the insignificant remarks given by Shakspere to Lady Macbeth at the close of this scene. We now come to the fifth act.

Gentlewoman. Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

Enter LADY MACBETH, *with a taper.*[62]

Physician. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Physician. You see her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense is shut.

[62] I should like her to enter less suddenly. A slower and more interrupted step more natural. She advances rapidly

Physician. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady. Yet here's a *spot.*

Physician. Hark! she speaks.

Lady. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—*One:*[63] *two*: why, then 'tis time to do't.[64]—Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? —Yet who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him?

Physician. Do you mark that?

Lady. The thane of Fife had a wife:[65] where is she now?—*What, will these hands ne'er*[66] be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, *no more o' that:*[67] you mar all *with this* starting.

---

to the table, sets down the light and rubs her hand, making the action of lifting up water in one hand at intervals.

[63] Listening eagerly.

[64] A strange unnatural whisper.

[65] Very melancholy tone.

[66] Melancholy peevishness.

[67] Eager whisper.

Physician. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. *Oh, oh, oh!*[68]

Physician. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

This is the last of these notes by which we have been able to follow the great actress from the exalted prophetic tone of her entrance to the sigh of imbecility at the end.

[68] This not a sigh. A convulsive shudder—very horrible. A tone of imbecility audible in the sigh.

Mrs. Siddons as Queen Katharine,
Mrs. Beverly, and Lady Randolph

Mrs. Siddons as Queen Katharine, Mrs. Beverly, and Lady Randolph

THE late Professor Bell's notes on Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth were received with an interest which more than justifies the publication of his remarks on the part of Katharine, as played by the great actress. No other part played by Mrs. Siddons was annotated by Professor Bell in the thoro manner adopted by him when witnessing her Lady Macbeth and Queen Katharine. He left, however, some notes on her Mrs. Beverley and Lady Randolph, concerning which a few words may be said before speaking of Shakspere's play.

Home's 'Douglas,' tho known to all by name, is so little read that a sketch of the plot is necessary to make Professor Bell's remarks intelligible to the general reader. Lady Randolph was secretly married in early

youth to one of a family at feud with her own, a Douglas, who was killed in battle three weeks after the marriage. The widow bore a son, but this infant, whose birth had been concealed, disappeared with his nurse, and his mother believes him to be dead. He, young Norval of the Grampian Hills, was however saved, and has been brought up in ignorance of his birth. Lady Randolph did not inform her second husband, Lord Randolph, of her first marriage, and explained her continual melancholy by attributing it to grief for the death of a brother. At the period when the play begins, your Norval is fortunate enough to save the life of his step-father, Lord Randolph, who introduces him to his unknown mother and promotes him to an honorable command. In the course of the play the mother recognises her son, and makes herself known to him. The intimacy which results enables a villain, Glenalvon, so to poison the mind of Lord Randolph with jealousy as to cause him to attempt the youth's life. Young Norval or Douglas, while defending himself against Lord Randolph, is wounded to death by the villain, and dies in his mother's presence. She, in

despair, commits suicide. In accordance with the taste of the day, neither combat nor suicide takes place before the audience.

Although much of the sentiment in this play is exprest in language which nowadays provokes a smile, an actress may find great scope for her art in presenting the feelings of the mother, who gradually acquires the certainty that her child still lives, and is the gallant youth who has already shown himself worthy of her love.

Professor Bell's notes, while sufficient to convince us that Mrs. Siddons could express great tenderness and strong affection, no less than the sterner emotions with which her name is more commonly connected, lack the precision by which, in writing of Shakspere's plays, he enables us in some measure to understand the means she employed. Referring to the wish exprest by the lady that every soldier of the two opposing armies might return in "peace and safety to his pleasant home," he writes:

> The most musical sound I ever heard, and on the conclusion a melancholy recollection seemed to fill her whole soul of the strength of that wish in former times, and of its first disappointment.

Again, where Lady Randolph addresses

Sincerity as the first of virtues, the note says:

Fine apostrophe. Her fine eyes raised in tears to heaven, her hands stretched out and elevated.

At the close of the well-known speech beginning, "My name is Norval," the following remark is appended:

The idea of her own child seems to have been growing, and at this point overwhelms her and fills her eyes with tears. Beautiful acting of this sweet feeling thruout these speeches. The interest she takes in the youth—her manifest retrospection.

The by-play of Lady Randolph thruout the long speeches of her husband and son was obviously the center of interest to the spectator, and ended in what is called—

A great and affecting burst of affection and interest, as if she had already almost identified him with her son, or adopted him to supply the loss.

Answering Norval, who assures her that he will never be unworthy of the favor shown him, Lady Randolph says:

I will be sworn thou wilt not. Thou shalt be *my knight.*

The words printed in italics were underlined by Professor Bell.

Lady Randolph explains to her confidante that while Norval spoke she thought that, had the son of Douglas lived, he might have resembled this young gallant stranger.

Professor Bell writes:

It is this she has been acting during the preceding scene.

There are no further notes on this play, nothing to guide us as to the manner in which Mrs. Siddons said the famous "Was he alive?" when a certain old man describes the finding of her infant son, who turns out to be Norval.

When we read Home's 'Douglas' we may feel a certain interest in our ancestors who liked it, but Moore's 'Gamester' awakens a feeling of loathing which extends even to the audience which can endure the degrading spectacle. The character of Lady Randolph is far from noble; this woman, who deceives her parents and husband, who lost her child and held her tongue, who has maundered thru life for twenty years nursing her melancholy and despising all good things present, because they are not better things past, belongs to no heroic type.

We cannot admire her indifference to the excellent husband who after twenty years of married life still sues in vain for

Decent affection and complacent kindness.

But Lady Randolph's well-bred coldness

is preferable to Mrs. Beverley's form of love. Says Mrs. Beverley: "All may be well yet. When he has nothing to lose, I shall fetter him in these arms again; and *then* what is it to be poor?" Professor Bell adds:

Such a speech as this the wonderful voice of Mrs. Siddons and her speaking eye make very affecting.

Surely no one but a Mrs. Siddons could do so.

An old servant offers to sacrifice his little fortune to the much-loved gamester who has been out all night for the first time: he proposes to go to him and if possible to bring him home. Mrs. Beverley says, "Do so, then; but take care how you upbraid him—I have never upbraided him." There is a note here:

Follows him to the door; then laying her hand on his arm detains him with an earnest look, and then speaks solemnly.

The lady uses much the same language to her husband's sister Charlotte, and Professor Bell notes:

She repeats an injunction she had given to Jarvis, more familiarly but with equal earnestness, with more sorrow and less of dignity; then crossing the stage to go out, she bows kindly to Charlotte; then, with her finger up and a fine look of determination, leaves her.

In a subsequent scene the husband has come home, and his honest friend Jewson tries to open his eyes to the machinations of the villain Stukeley by telling what a bad boy he had been at school. Mrs. Siddons, who listens, is described thus:

She stands with riveted attention. She is behind at a little distance. The earnest and piercing look of her eyes, the simplicity of her attitude, is perfect nature.

The gamester replies to his honest friend: "You are too busy, sir." Mrs. Beverley rejoins: "No, not too busy; mistaken, perhaps —that had been milder." The note on this runs:

Comes up to Beverley with a hasty anxiety and hurried voice, alarm and kind reproach in her look and manner.

The notes on the 'Gamester' end here.

We are nowadays happily delivered from the false sentiment which required the ideal woman to love the more, the more she was ill-treated. We are rather in danger of shutting our eyes to the real beauty of patient Grisyld, the original of many copies, mostly, like Mrs. Beverley's caricatures. Chaucer's Grisyld fawns unpleasantly, but in the story of Griselda as Boccaccio tells it, we find a

very noble woman who thought herself of so small account in this great world, that she claimed nothing, while she held herself bound in all things to do her best. Her goodness is above all strong, whereas Mrs. Beverley is above all weak; her husband ruins, cheats, insults her, and she simply dotes on him all the time with slavish animal affection. No play can, however, be successful which has not some merit, and it is easy to recognise that in the conduct of the plot Moore shows skill, in so far that each scene reveals a deeper and deeper misery.

In Queen Katharine, Shakspere has shown to what extent a woman of heroic mold might continue to love a husband who had mortally wronged her, and how fully the same woman could be just to a fallen enemy. Katharine, unlike Mrs. Beverley, is both good and strong.

Professor Bell wrote as follows on the fly-leaf of 'King Henry the Eighth:'

Mrs. Siddon's Queen Katharine is a perfect picture of a great, dignified, somewhat impatient spirit, conscious of rectitude, and adorned with every generous and every domestic virtue.

Her dignified contempt of Wolsey when comparing her own royal descent, her place and title as

queen, her spotless honor, with the mean arts and machinations by which this man was driving her into the toils and breaking in upon her happiness; her high spirit and impatient temper; the energies of a strong and virtuous mind guarding the King at all hazards from popular discontent and defending her own fame with eloquence and dignity; her energy subdued, but her queen-like dignity unimpaired by sickness; and the candor and goodness of her heart in her dying conversation concerning her great enemy—all this, beautifully painted by Mrs. Siddons, making this one of the finest female characters in the English drama.

Our notes begin with the entrance of the Queen. The text, as before, is that of Mrs. Inchbald. The words on which the emphasis fell are underlined in the notes and are here printed in italics. An acute accent marks a word on which the voice was raised in pitch; a grave accent marks a word on which the voice fell.

Act I. Scene 2.

Enter the Queen, *ushered by* Guildford, *who places a cushion on which she kneels. The* King *rises, takes her up, and places her by him.*

King. Rise.

Queen. Nay, we must longer kneel; I am a suitor.

King. Arise, and take place by us:—half your suit
Never name to us; you have half our power;
The other moiety, ere you ask, is given;
Repeat your will, and take it.[2]
Queen. *Thank your Majesty.*
That you would love yourself, and, in that love,
Not unconsider'd leave your honor, nor
The dignity of your office, is the point
Of my petition.
King. Lady mine, proceed.
Queen. I am solicited, not by a few,
And those of true condition, that your subjects
Are in great grievance: there have been commissions
Sent down among them, which have flaw'd the heart
Of all their loyalties:—wherein, altho,
My good lord cardinal, they vent reproaches
Most bitterly` on you', as putter-on
Of these exactions, yet the king our master
(*Whose honor heaven shield from soil!*[3]) even he escapes not

[2] Rises and sits by him. Then, in a composed and dignified tone, addresses him, very articulate and very earnest.
[3] Tenderly and religiously.

Language unmannerly, yea, such which breaks
The sides of loyalty, and almost appears
In loud rebellion.
Nor. Not almost appears—
It doth appear; for, upon these taxations,
The clothiers all, not able to maintain
The many to them 'longing, have put off
The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers, who,
Unfit for other life, compell'd by hunger,
And lack of other means, in desperate manner
Daring the event to the teeth. are all in uproar,
And danger serves among them.
King. Taxation!
Wherein? and what taxation?—my lord cardinal,
You that are blam'd for it alike with us,
Know you of this taxation?
Wol. Please you, sir,
I know but of a single part in aught
Pertains to the state; and front but in that file
Where others tell steps with me.
Queen. No, my lord,

You *know* no more than others:[4] but you frame
Things that are known alike, which are not wholesome
To those which would not know them, and yet must
Perforce be their acquaintance. These exactions
Whereof my sovereign would have note, they are
Most pestilent to the hearing; and to bear them
The back is sacrifice to the load. They say
They are devis'd by you; or else you suffer
Too hard an exclamation.

King. Still exaction!
The nature of it? In what kind, let's know,
Is this exaction?

Queen. [5]I am much too venturous
In tempting of your patience; but am bolden'd
Under your promis'd pardon.[5] [6]The subjects' grief
Comes thru commissions, which compel from each

[4] Mildly, but very decidedly, accusing him.
[5] Gracious apology.
[6] Very articulate and clear.

The sixth part of his substance, to be levied
Without delay; and the pretence for this
Is nam'd, your wars in France:[6] this makes bold mouths:
Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze
Allegiance in them; their curses now
Live where their prayers did; and it's come to pass,
This tractable obedience is a slave
To each incensed will. [7]I would your highness
Would give it quick consideration.
King. By my life,
This is against our pleasure.

The notes cease until the surveyor of the Duke of Buckingham enters, to whom Wolsey speaks:

Wol. Stand forth; and with bold spirit relate what you,
Most like a careful subject, have collected
Out of the Duke of Buckingham.
King. Speak freely.
Surv. First, it was usual with him—every day

[7] Very earnest.

It would infect his speech—that if the king
Should without issue die, he'd carry it so
To make the scepter his: these very words
I have heard him utter to his son-in-law,
Lord Aberga'ny; to whom by oath he menac'd
Revenge upon the cardinal.[8]

Wol. Please your highness, note
This dangerous conception in this point.
Not friended by his wish, to your high person
His will is most malignant; and it stretches
Beyond you, to your friends.

Queen. [9]My learn'd lord cardinal,
Deliver all with *charity*.[9]

King. Speak on:
How grounded he his title to the crown,
Upon our fail? to this point hast thou heard him
At any time speak aught?

The Surveyor continues to give his evidence, stating that a Chartreux friar had phophesied to the Duke that he should gov-

[8] She hears all this with a dignified, judge-like aspect, often darting a keen look of inquiry at the witness and the Cardinal.

[9] A grand sustained voice. The emphasis on "*charity*" strong.

ern England. Then the Queen intervenes:

Queen.[10] If I know you well,
You were the duke's surveyor, and lost your office
On the complaint o' the tenants; [11]*take good heed*
You charge not in your spleen a noble person,
And spoil your nobler soul: I say, take heed.[11]

King. Go forward.

The Surveyor continues his evidence, and states that Buckingham had said that if he had been committed to the Tower he would have put a knife into the King; on which the King exclaims:

King. A giant traitor!

Wol. Now, madam, may his highness live in freedom,
And this man out of prison?

Queen. God mend *all!*[12]

The scene shortly ends. Mrs. Siddons in this scene evidently brought into strong re-

[10] A very penetrating look. Looks very steadfastly and seriously in his face for some time, then speaks.

[11] The second part of this speech very severe tone of remonstrance. Grand swell on *"and spoil your nobler soul,"* "I say," &c., very emphatic.

[12] A long emphasis, intimating that the Cardinal and his designs were known to her.

lief the intellect and power of the Queen as well as her rectitude. In the fourth scene of the second act the Queen enters, called into the court at Blackfriars. The clerk of the court says, "Katharine, queen of England, come into the court." Again Guildford precedes the Queen with a cushion, and again she kneels.

Act II. Scene 4.

Queen. [13]Sir, I desire you do me right and
justice,
And to bestow your pity on me; for
I am a most poor woman, and a stranger,
Born out of your dominions; having here
No judge indifferent, nor no more assurance
Of equal friendship and proceeding.[13] [*She rises.*] [14]Alas, sir,
In what have I offended you? what cause
Hath my behavior given to your displeasure,
That thus you should proceed to put me off,
And take your good grace from me?[14]
[15]Heaven witness,

[13] A most sweet and gracious prelude, yet no departure from her dignity.

[14] Remonstrance, dignified, without any bitterness.

[15] Earnest protestation.

I have been to you a *true and humble* wife,
At all times to your will conformable.[15]
[16]Sir, call to mind
That I have been your wife, in this obedience,
Upward of twenty years, and have been blest
With many children by you: if, in the course
And process of this time, you can report,
And *prove it too,* against mine honor aught,
My bond to wedlock, or my love and duty,
Against your sacred person', in God's name,
Turn me away; `and let the foul'st contempt
Shut door upon me, and so give *me* up
To the sharpest kind of justice.[16] [17]Please
you, sir,
The king, your father, was reputed for
A prince' most prudent`, of an excellent
And *unmatch'd* wit and judgment`: Ferdinand,
My father, king of Spain, was reckon'd one
The wisest prince, that *there* had reign'd by
many
A year before: it is not to be question'd
That they had gather'd a wise council to
them

[16] Dignified confidence in her own innocence.

[17] Pause. A new division of the discourse. The argument beautifully spoken, very distinct.

Of *every* realm, that did debate this business,
Who *deem'd our marriage lawful:* wherefore I humbly
Beseech you, sir, to spare me, till I may
Be by my friends in Spain advis'd; whose counsel
I will implore; if not, i' the name of God,
Your pleasure be fulfill'd!

Wol. [18]You have here, lady
(And of your choice), these reverend fathers; men
Of singular integrity and learning,
Yea, the elect of the land, who are assembled
To plead your cause: it shall be therefore bootless,
That longer you desire the court; as well
For your own quiet, as to rectify
What is unsettled in the king.

Cam. [19]His grace
Hath spoken well and justly: therefore, madam,
It's fit this royal session do proceed;
And that, without delay, their arguments

[18] This response taken by her with great impatience, very indignant at his interference.

[19] Surprise and grief when the legate speaks thus.

Be now produc'd and heard. [[20]CAMPEIUS *rises.*]

Queen. Lord Cardinal,
To you I speak.

Wol. Your pleasure, madam?

Queen. Sir,
I am about to weep; but, thinking that
We are a queen [21](*or long have dream'd so*),
[21]certain
The *daughter of a king,*[22] my drops of tears
I'll turn to sparks of fire.

Wol. Be patient yet.

Queen. [23]*I will, when you are humble;* nay, *before,*
Or God will punish me.[23] [24] I do believe,
Induc'd by potent circumstances, that
You are mine enemy; and make my challenge`.
You shall not be my judge: for it is you

[20] When Campeius comes to her she turns from him impatiently; then makes a sweet bow of apology, but dignified. Then to Wolsey, turned and looking *from* him, with her hand pointing back to him, in a voice of thunder, "to *you* I speak." This too loud perhaps; you must recollect her insulted dignity and impatience of spirit before fully sympathising with it.

[21] Great contempt in this parenthesis.

[22] Very dignified.

[23] Great contempt. Her voice swelled, but monotonous.

[24] Very distinct articulate charge aginst him.

Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me,
Which God's dew quench![24]—[25]*Therefore,* I say, again,
I utterly abhor, yea, from my soul
Refuse you for my judge:[26] whom, yet once more,
[26]I hold my most malicious foe, and think *not*
At all a friend to truth.[26]
Wol. [27]I do profess
You speak not like yourself; who ever yet
Have stood to charity, and display'd the effects
Of disposition gentle, and of wisdom
O'ertopping woman's power. Madam, you do me wrong:
I have no spleen against you; nor injustice
For you or any: how far I have proceeded,
Or how far further shall, is warranted
By a commission from the consistory,
Yea, the whole consistory of Rome. You charge me
That I have blown this coal: I do deny it:

[25] Great swell.

[26] "I hold," &c., very pointed. "Not *at all,*" &c., syllabic and most impressive.

[27] Great impatience and contempt during this speech of Wolsey.

The king is present: if it be known to him
That I gainsay my deed, how may he wound,
And worthily, my falsehood! yea, as much
As you have done my truth. If he know
That I am free of your report, he knows
I am not of your wrong. Therefore in him
It lies to cure me: and the cure is, to
Remove these thoughts from you; the which
before
His highness shall speak in, I do beseech
You, gracious madam, to unthink your speaking,
And to say no more.
Queen.[28] My lord, my lord,
I am a single woman, much too weak
To oppose your cunning. [29]You're *meek* and
humble-*mouth'd;*
You sign your place and calling, in full seeming
With meekness and humility; but your *heart*
Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and
pride.[29]
You have, by fortune and his highness'
favors,

[28] Breaking impatiently thru his speech.

[29] Contempt. Contrast strong between "mouthed" and "heart."

Gone slightly o'er low steps, and now are mounted
Where powers are your retainers; and your words,
Domestics to you, serve your will, as 't please
Yourself pronounce their office. I must tell you,
You tender more your person's honor than
Your high profession spiritual: that again
I do refuse you for my judge; and here,
Before you all, appeal unto the pope,
To bring my whole cause 'fore his holiness,
And to be judg'd by him.

[*She curtsies to the* KING, *and offers to depart.*]

Cam. The queen is obstinate,
Stubborn to justice, apt to accuse it, and
Disdainful to be tried by 't; 'tis not well
She's going away.

King. Call her again.

Crier. Katharine, queen of England, come into the court.

Grief. Madam, you are called back.

Queen. [30]What need you note it? pray you, keep your way:

[30] Very impatient, angry, and loud.

When you are call'd, return.[30]—[31]Now the
Lord help,
They vex me past my patience![31]—Pray you,
pass on:
[32]I will not tarry: [32]no, nor ever more,
Upon this business, my appearance make
In any of their courts.

[*Exeunt* GUILDFORD *and the* QUEEN.

Professor Bell was as good a hearer as actor or actress need hope for.

The scene in the fourth act where Katharine is discovered sick unto death is prefaced with these remarks:

> Mrs. Siddons in this scene admirable in simplicity and pathos. No affectation, not a more complete deception in dramatic art than this of the sickness of Katharine. The voice subdued to softness, humility, and sweet calmness. The soul too much exhausted to endure or risk great emotion. The flash of indignation of her former spirit very fine at Guildford's interruption.

Unfortunately there is only one more remark; it is appended to Katharine's verdict on Wolsey, which in Mrs. Inchbald's edition runs as follows:

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[31] Peevish expression.

[32] Strong determination.

Queen. So may he rest; his faults lie gently on him!
Yet thus far, Cromwell, give me leave to speak him,
And yet with charity.—He was a man
Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
Himself with princes.
His promises were, as he then was, mighty;
But his performance, as he is now, nothing.
Of his own body he was ill, and gave
The clergy ill example.

Professor Bell says of this:

Beautifully spoken, with some mixture of energy; but the subdued voice thruout.

Probably the writer was too much affected by this scene to be able to make minute critical observations.

Of Mrs. Siddons' readings, Professor Bells says:

Mrs. Siddons in her readings was like the tragic muse. She sat on a chair raised on a small platform, and the look and posture which always presents itself to me is that with which she contemplates the figure of Hamlet's ghost. Her eyes elevated, her head a little drawn back and inclined upwards, her fine countenance filled with reverential awe and horror, and the chilling whisper scarcely audible but horrific. Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture of Mrs. Siddons as the tragic muse gives a

perfect conception of the general effect of her look and figure in these readings.

In her readings the under parts, which in acting are given offensively by some vile player, were read with a beauty and grace of utterance which was like the effect of very fine musical recitation, while the higher parts were the grand and moving airs. It was like a fine composition in painting; the general groundwork simple, the parts for effect raised and touched by a master's hand.

In the higher parts it was like the finest acting. The looks, the tones, the rapid hurry of the tumultuous emotions, the chilling whisper of horror, the scream of high-wrought passion, were given less strongly, but as affecting as on the stage.

The comic touches were light and pretty, but she has no comic power.

The graceful and sweet parts were quite enchanting. The mellow subdued voice of sorrow, to give variety, she kept much in whisper—very audible notwithstanding. *Her* whisper is more audible and intelligible than the loudest ranting of an ordinary player.

She read 'Hamlet' and the 'Merchant of Venice.' 'Lear,' I think, should be read by her, not acted.

There is special mention of her manner when reading Hamlet's speech beginning

Angels and ministers of grace defend us.

Mrs. Siddons in reading gave, by her look of reverential awe and chilling whisper of horror, more fully the idea of a ghost's presence than any spectral illusion on the stage.

This was a whispered speech thruout, growing in energy and confidence as other ideas took the place

of the first startle of horror and dismay. Kean speaks too loudly and boldly, not enough as in the withering presence of a supernatural being. The first line should be a whisper of horror, with a long pause before venturing to address the phantom.

It is believed that Sir Charles Bell made notes similar in character to those now publisht; but if so the books have been mislaid. There is a curious passage in a letter from him to his brother, dated the 10th of June, 1809, in which he says:

Jeffrey saw my "Shakspere" and liked it much, and talkt to Mrs. Siddons about it. I said I intended some time to take a good play and make it so *in fancy*. He said he should like to do so too. He saw your pencillings in the margin; not knowing whether you would like it, and not knowing what they were, I told him they were all mine; so perhaps his liking this kind of thing was owing to you. Do not forget to pursue it.

This appropriation by one man of another's work, reads oddly, tho it is an indication of the absolute confidence of one brother in the other. We may all feel glad that Professor G. J. Bell did pursue the plan, and wish he had pursued it further.

In reading of Mrs. Siddons one cannot but regret that her genius should have been employed in representing a Mrs. Beverley

or even a Lady Randolph. It is a standing reproach to our literature that outside the roll of Shakspere's characters a great actor can hardly find a great part. When we reflect that West and Haydon have been followed at no distant time by Millais, Leighton, Burne-Jones, and Watts, we cannot but hope that in a sister art a similar revival may occur. The time seems ripe, for the novel is in decadence, and coming writers must win distinction in a new field. A man who has sufficient talent to make a good novel would probably succeed in writing a good play if he went to work in the right way; but the art of the playwright has not been studied by our leading authors for many generations. This art is that of selecting proper subjects for stage representation and giving them such a form as will enable the actors to move their audience. The success of a play in stirring an audience depends less than is usually supposed on style, on the delineation of character, or even on the invention of an ingenious and probable plot. Plays succeed which are glaringly defective in all these respects; for instance, the 'Lady of Lyons.' The one necessary condition for

success is that the scene represented shall move the audience; the emotion may be sad or merry, noble or ignoble, but emotion there must be. If this element be wanting, no depth of thought, no beauty of language, no variety of incidents will save the play. The skilled playwright knows what scenes will stir the hearers, and how best to frame each scene and the whole play with this purpose. If with this knowledge he possesses originality of conception and beauty of style, his plays become part of the literature of his country; without these higher qualities he remains a mere playwright, but we go to see his plays, built up as they are of old worn-out materials. The playwright is familiar with the materials used in his art; he knows the stage well on both sides of the footlights; he mixes with actors, managers, stage-managers, scene-painters, and stage-carpenters. From Aeschylus downwards, all great dramatists have had this practical knowledge of the instruments at their command. A drama should be written for the stage, as a song should be written to be sung. The author must subconsciously—if such a word may be used—have the stage always in mind:

the exits, the entrances, the time required to cross the stage, the positions of the actors, their very attitudes and dress. No author provides more admirably for all these stage exigencies than Shakspere, as any one may see who will consider his inimitable contrivances for removing dead bodies from the stage. There is no doubt a danger that those who become familiar with stage-machinery may content themselves with remodelling the old puppets, rearranging stock incidents, and repatching old rags to produce good guaranteed old stage effects; but a man of real talent would not be misled by the Mr. Worldly Wiseman of the stage.

We may learn much from French practice as to the frame-work of a drama. A great part of the success which is certainly achieved by modern French plays depends on the art shown in their construction. M. E. Legouvé, who is a skilful playwright, tells us frankly how a Frenchman proceeds. First, he chooses or conceives the situation which is to be the crisis of the play: from this he works backwards, considering how that situation is to be brought about, and what characters will be necessary for the purpose. His

first act is devoted wholly to informing the audience of the relations between the characters at the beginning of the piece; his second act develops the plot; in his third act the plot thickens; his fourth act contains the crisis for which the play is written, and his fifth act gives the solution of the knot which has been tied in the fourth act.

These rules seem rather barren, but we shall see their significance if we consider what other courses may be followed.

A writer may begin by inventing an ingenious or interesting plot, or by choosing some historical period which he will dramatise, or by conceiving some marked characters whose feelings and thoughts he will expound. M. Legouvé tells us that none of these is the French method; that for the French author the motive of the play is essentially one situation; that his characters are chosen so as to make this situation tell, and that his plot is a matter for after-consideration, devised so as to reveal the characters of the persons and lead up to the crisis. Shakspere did not work in this way, but in this one matter of construction it may be worth while to listen to maxims derived

from the study of plays which in all other respects are greatly inferior to his. Moreover, these maxims are ultimately derived from the practice of Sophocles, no mean master.

The French, following the Greeks in this, look on a play as a representation of feelings rather than of actions. The incidents which occasion the feelings, and the actions they lead to, are alike kept in the background in French as in Greek plays. Rapid action in a play does not, in France, mean a rapid succession of events, but a rapid development of feeling in the persons of the drama. A scene in which the emotion represented is monotonous will be dull even if crammed with incidents.

The author who is penetrated with the belief that the aim of the drama is to produce emotion will be indifferent to beauty of language or of metaphor, to profound philosophy and to brilliant sayings, except when these help to move the audience. He will know that obscurity of language or of thought is fatal to his purpose. The knot, crisis, or motive of his play will be chosen by him to exhibit, not a striking event, but

strong feelings. He will so contrive the story leading to the crisis as to exhibit a gradually culminating series of emotions, produced by incidents arranged so as powerfully to affect the personages of the drama, and thru them the audience. The direct action of incidents on the audience is of importance only in that low form of art which aims at stirring the vulgar feeling of curiosity and the vulgar love of gaping.

The most telling play is that in which the feelings naturally exhibited by the persons of the drama are strongest. The greatest play is that which shows the feelings of the noblest men and women. This, in the opinion of Plato and Aristotle, is the object of the drama in its higher form.

Plato, in the 'Laws,' after saying that no freeborn man or woman should learn comic songs, grotesque dances, or burlesques, but that it might be well to have these things presented by slaves and hired strangers, in order better to understand by contrast that which is truly beautiful, speaks thus, referring to his ideal city: "If any serious poets, such as write tragedies, should ask us, 'Shall we, O strangers, come to your city and bring our

poetry and act it? How stand your laws in this respect?' what answer ought we to give to these divine men? For myself I should reply thus: 'Oh, most excellent of strangers, we are ourselves, to the utmost of our power, poets of a tragedy the most beautiful and the best; for the whole of our polity consists in an imitation of a life the most beautiful and best, which we may say is in reality the truest tragedy.'" We here see that Plato thought the object of tragedy was to represent the noblest kind of life, and only rejected the imitation as unnecessary where this life itself was to be seen.

Aristotle defined what he meant by a tragedy with greater fulness. He points out that a certain magnitude is necessary in the event represented; that the spectator as he follows the action feels pity and a kind of awe which may be termed fear or terror, and that he comes away from the spectacle chastened and purified. The first part of his definition requires that the action shall be heroic, or such as represents the thoughts, deeds, and feelings of great men. By the last part of his definition he, like Plato, required that the action should have moral

beauty. This does not imply that a play should be didactic, or deal only with the actions of well-behaved persons. The teaching of the dramatist is as the teaching of nature. See these heroes in their strength and their weakness, live with them, and you will learn from them. The function of the tragic poet, from Aeschylus to Shakspere, has been to show us the intense life of heroic men and women at the moment of their trial.

But not all heroic or beautiful actions can be made the subjects of a tragedy. Aristotle points out that the action must be such as will stir certain moral emotions—pity and fear he calls them; but the English words very imperfectly describe the feelings roused by a great tragedy; those feelings give keen pleasure, whereas pity and fear are painful. Sympathy may be a better word; the pleasure is to live a little while greatly with the great ones of the world, to feel their feelings, to experience their passions, to dare, to love, to hate with them, so that for a little while we too are great; but words fail to describe emotions to those who have not felt them. If it be suggested that the sensation experienced while watching a tragedy

is rather a feeling *with* the persons of the drama than a feeling *for* them; that when Othello cries out, "O the pity of it!" we feel as he feels and what he feels, and are very far indeed from entertaining a pleasant and comfortable pity *for* him; that the strange pleasure depends on our recognition in ourselves of the power to feel as Othello feels, to suffer as he suffers, even to sin as he sins; this suggestion may awaken a memory of what the emotion was in those who have known it but can explain nothing to others.

The higher and lower forms of the drama differ simply in respect of the character of the feelings awakened. The highest may be our highest moral emotions; the lowest, the lowest animal passions. Either moral or immoral the stage must be, and always has been, for its very existence depends on its action upon this part of our nature.

The morality of a play depends on no exclusion of crime, no enumeration of maxims, no system of rewards or punishments; it flows from the heart of the author and is tested by its action on the audience.

It is in moral grandeur that Shakspere, Aeschylus, and Sophocles stand absolutely

pre-eminent. It is to this that Racine and Corneille owe their hold on men. It is by this that the 'Misanthrope' claims high rank. It is in this that the modern French stage chiefly fails.

The French dramatic authors of the Second Empire have succeeded in producing living plays, because, besides being skilled playwrights, they do in their works appeal to real and strong feelings. A certain moral poverty alone prevents the school from taking a very high rank. The authors have usually meant well; and if the verdict must be that their moral ideal is always poor and often false, this conclusion is forced upon us by the words and actions rather of their good than of their bad people. Even Victor Hugo's verse cannot make us believe that Ruy Blas is not a poor creature.

Our own writers show no similar moral ineptitude, and since they have created scores of types which in freshness, truth, power and interest surpass the men and women of French authors, we are driven to the conclusion that if the English do not write great plays it is rather because they do not know how, than that they lack power. Our best

authors, when they attempt the drama, seem to be misled by a desire to appeal rather to the intellect or to the aesthetic sense of their hearers than to their moral emotions. If they were to mix with actors on familiar terms they would soon learn the playwright's art; for the actor knows what will succeed on the stage. An actor calls a part well written when the words and situations are such as enable him powerfully to express strong feelings. He will, if permitted, cut out every line which does not help him in this, his art, and for stage purposes he is right. Charm of style, beauty of meter, wisdom of thought, novelty of character, ingenuity of plot, poetry of conception, all these things may be added to a play with much advantage; but they will not insure success either singly or all together. A play which does not move an audience, as neither intellectual nor artistic pleasure ever can move them, must fail upon the stage.

Professor Bell's notes show what he felt when a Siddons acted a Katharine. He was a man of hard intellect, whose dry legal labors still guide shrewd lawyers. He was a man of learning and taste; but when see-

ing a great actress in a great play, no ingenious theories, no verbal emendations, no philosophical reflections, no analytical remarks occur to him. He records his emotion, and, as far as he can, how that emotion was produced. He may be taken as representing an ideal audience—that which does not comment, but responds to author and to actor.

NOTES

NOTES

THE paper on 'Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth' first appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for 1878; and that on 'Mrs. Siddons as Queen Katharine, Mrs. Beverley, and Lady Randolph' was contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine* for April, 1882. Both of them were reprinted in the first volume of 'Papers Literary, Scientific, &c.' by Fleeming Jenkin, F.R.S., LL.D., Professor of Engineering in the University of Edinburgh. Edited by Sidney Colvin and J. A. Ewing, F.R.S. London, and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887. They are included in the present series by the kind permission of Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin and of Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., for which the committee in charge of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University desires to express here its gratitude.

The outline of Mrs. Siddons' life which constitutes the first section of the Introduction is amended and amplified from a paper contributed to the second volume of 'Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States from the days of David Garrick to the Present Time,' edited by Brander Matthews and Laurence Hutton and publisht in five volumes in New York in 1886-7. The outline of Fleeming Jenkin's life which

constitutes the second section of the Introduction has been specially prepared for this occasion.

There are half-a-dozen biographies of Mrs. Siddons, of which the most valuable are those by Campbell and Boaden; and she figures amply in the theatrical criticism of her time. And there are interesting glimpses of her to be gleaned from Mme. D'Arblay's 'Diary,' Macready's 'Reminiscences,' Leigh Hunt's 'Autobiography,' Moore's 'Diary,' Boswell's 'Johnson,' and the 'Memoirs of Charles Mayne Young.' In view of the fact that contemporary critics were sometimes inclined to comment on the tendency of all the Kemble family to make pauses of a length then unusual, it may be worth while to quote the opinion of a comedian of the generation which has just passed off the stage. In one of his conversations with Francis Wilson, Joseph Jefferson declared that the eloquent pauses of Mrs. Siddons were as effective as her eloquent speeches, since a play "passes so swiftly that unless you give the minds of the auditors a chance to rest upon the important themes and speeches,—time to receive the proper impression, as acid upon copper—there can be no effect or result. I learn something about my art every night and have but recently verified the justice of the old-time claim for eloquent pauses. Mrs. Siddons was right, when she

said that the secret of acting was proper pauses. George Henry Lewes, who knew more about acting than most critics, added cleverly that one must pause without seeming to do so and without making a wait." ('Joseph Jefferson: Reminiscences of a Fellow Player.' By Francis Wilson, New York, 1906, p. 28.)

The fame of Mrs. Siddons as the greatest tragic actress of the English-speaking stage is so firmly establisht that there is no need to buttress it by any added record of the impression made by her upon her contemporaries. Yet it may not be a work of supererogation to append here the lines in which Charles Lamb recorded the impression she had made upon him:

As when a child on some long winter's night,
  Affrighted, clinging to its grandma's knees,
With eager wondering and perturbed delight
  Listens strange tales of fearful dark decrees
Mutter'd to wretch by necromantic spell;
  Or of those hags, who, at the watching time
  Of murky midnight, ride the air sublime,
And mingle foul disguise with fiends of hell,
  Cold horror drinks its blood! anon the tear
More gentle starts, to hear the beldame tell
  Of pretty babes that lov'd each other dear,
Murder'd by cruel uncle's mandate fell;
  Ev'n such the shiv'ring joys thy tones impart,
  Ev'n so thou, Siddons, meltest my sad heart.

B. M.

OF THIS BOOK THREE HUNDRED AND
THIRTY-THREE COPIES WERE PRINTED
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